

Compound Subjects

Teaching

A **compound subject** is made up of two or more simple subjects joined by a conjunction such as *and*, *or*, or *nor*.

And A compound subject whose subjects are joined by *and* usually takes a plural verb.

The radio **and** the CD player are both playing.

Sometimes a compound subject joined by *and* is used as a single unit and takes a singular verb.

Macaroni and cheese is one of my favorite meals.

Or or Nor When the parts of a compound subject are joined by *or* or *nor*, the verb should agree with the part closest to it.

Neither the speakers **nor** the music sounds clear.

Either a new CD player **or** better speakers are needed.

Making Verbs Agree with Compound Subjects

In each sentence, underline each part of the compound subject. Underline twice the word joining the parts. Then underline the verb in parentheses that agrees with the subject.

1. The school's front door or side entrances (is, are) going to be open for tonight's orchestra program.
2. Neither the night buses nor the subway (go, goes) to the school.
3. My uncle or my grandparents (plan, plans) to drive me there on time.
4. The violin and cello (is, are) orchestra instruments.
5. Neither the violins nor my viola (was, were) in tune.
6. Strings and percussion (make, makes) an interesting combination.
7. Either Ms. Meade or her assistants (has, have) the programs.
8. The classroom clocks and my watch (disagrees, disagree).
9. Neither practice nor rehearsals (prepares, prepare) performers completely for a performance in front of an audience.
10. Either the music teachers or the principal (is, are) going to say something.
11. Musicians and parents (is, are) invited to a reception after the concert.
12. Either the first song or the last two pieces (is, are) my personal favorites.
13. Neither the musicians nor the conductor (is, are) tired yet.
14. The parents and relatives (are, is) applauding loudest.
15. Either the trumpeters or the tuba player (leaves, leave) the stage last.
16. Students and teachers (is, are) already anticipating next year's concert.

**Lesson
2**

Compound Subjects

More Practice

A. Making Verbs Agree with Compound Subjects

In each sentence, underline each part of the compound subject. Underline twice the word joining the parts. Then underline the verb in parentheses that agrees with the subject.

1. Either the jugglers or the magician (perform, performs) next.
2. Neither the brownies nor the pie (taste, tastes) good.
3. The Baileys and Lees (is, are) neighbors.
4. Either the early Greeks or mythology (is, are) a good topic for your research paper.
5. Neither scary movies nor the dark (frighten, frightens) me.
6. Both the Scouts and their leader (know, knows) the way to the campsite.
7. Neither the bread nor the bananas (is, are) on sale this week.
8. Both the index and the glossary (is, are) in the back of the book.
9. The librarian or the science teachers (help, helps) me find books for my project.
10. Neither my brothers nor my father (like, likes) mushroom pizza.

B. Using the Correct Verb with a Compound Subject

Choose and write the correct form of the given verb.

1. Either some dogs or a raccoon (have, has) raided the garbage. _____
2. Both ocean liners and lake vessels (dock, docks) here. _____
3. Neither Illinois nor Indiana (have, has) mountain ranges. _____
4. Neither the tent nor the sleeping bags (arrive, arrives) until later in the week. _____
5. The orchestra and the band (are, is) playing together at the assembly. _____
6. Either the coach or the co-captains (call, calls) time. _____
7. Neither the players nor the coach (have, has) left the locker room yet. _____
8. Both beagles and basset hounds (howl, howls) a lot. _____
9. Either the first violinist or the teacher (play, plays) that part. _____
10. Neither the crew members nor the pilot (were, was) injured. _____

Compound Subjects

Application

A. Correcting Errors in Agreement

Find the mistakes in the paragraph. For each sentence, write the correct present tense verb to agree with the compound subject. If the verb does agree, write

Correct.

(1) Several students and our music teacher is forming a new jazz band.
(2) Neither the students nor Mr. Blaine has much time for practice. (3) But for us, neither orchestra music nor band tunes is totally satisfying. (4) Our trumpeter and the drummer has played in jazz bands before. (5) Either Mr. Blaine or the two experienced jazz players has selected the other members of the group.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

B. Using the Correct Verb with Compound Subjects

Write a sentence using each compound subject given and a verb in the present tense. Add words to the given subject as needed for the sense of the sentence.

1. The conductor and the musicians _____

2. Either the newspaper or the television announcers _____

3. Neither the ice nor the snowdrifts _____

4. A parrot or a turtle _____

5. The players and their coach _____

6. Neither the school bus nor the teachers' cars _____
